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# The IDLER

*Public Occurrences, Comment, Excursions & Rational Entertainment*

Nr 27 JANUARY 1967 25c THE COPY


## The Wide Track Candidates

HOLY MODERATION, BATMAN!

In Which the New Elephant is Examined and Found to be, After All, Still an Elephant; Also: A. H. S. Candlin Describes an Exciting Interoceanic Canal Project in South America;and Charlie McDowell Becomes a Victim of the Weather Bureau's Semantic Smog;as Well as Several Other Diversions.

No matter how many times you multiply nothing, you are still left with nothing. This grade-school mathematical truism is brought to mind by the sudden proliferation of Republican candidates for the presidency, who--almost without exception--have less to say than Calvin Coolidge but don't have the grace not to say it. They are flattered by, and flatter themselves with, thoughts of iminent ascendency to the White House and no one--least of all the candidates themselves--pauses to consider what justification there is for such ideas.

From all over America they have come; in their Corfam shoes, Banlon over-the-white-calf-black-socks, Sansabelt slacks, Truval Permanent Press shirts, Silk-Soft handshakes, Stay-Fresh smiles and speeches laced lightly with Old Spice. They are the New Breed, the Wide-Track, Tuned Candidates. Look Concerned but exhude Confidence, baby! Okay, cut! We can use that take.

What'd he say? Who cares. Let Ronald, Chuck and George do it. All set to set trends. The GOP for '68. Your choice in five models and 16 decorator colors to suit every turn in the war or Watts.

Check that chin on George. A powerful new candidate for every pocketbook. Don't believe it? Ask the public. A recent poll showed that Americans prefer George Romney to Lyndon Johnson as their president. That's a better preproduction sales record than the Mustang had, especially encouraging when a random sampling by anyone on any day will reveal that approximately .0067 per cent of the public knows what Romney believes about anything.

No wonder we are afraid of LSD. We fear it may jolt us out of our technicolor, sequin bedizened, megaphonic world into something ressembling reality and the American political system won't be able to stand it. We'll turn schizoid and jam the Verrazano Bridge waiting to jump off.

The experts tell us that Vietnam was not an issue last election. Nor civil rights. Nor inflation. Who needs issues when you've got the beat?

Let's do the Flea
With George Romney.
Uga, uga, oohm!

Once upon a time in the long ago backside of American history, people used to feel they could ask where a presidential candidate stood without being


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# The Idler

Published 11 months a year in Washington, D. C., for the edification, information, and entertainment of its readers. Thirty-five Cents the copy. Three Dollars a year (Four Dollars abroad).



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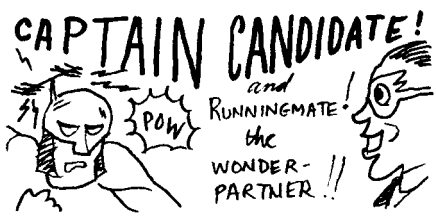
hooted out of the hall. Jack Kennedy changed all that. It no longer mattered where a candidate stood. In fact, standing was a handicap. The man who moved was the winner. The electorate went where the action was supposed to be, and has been doing so ever since. Politics became a great big pinball machine. All the silver balls looked the same, but if you got one that kept bouncing against the springs you stuck with it, shaking the device for extra points until the shiny sphere finally rolled into the slot. Jack Kennedy lit up the big board all the way from the primaries to election night. As it turned out, he had a better idea of where he was going than he let on, but honest recall of the days preceding November 1960 forces the admission that all we knew about the man was that he was an apparent swinger. And that was good enough.

All right. Forget the issues and all the other wedding cake cornices of antiquated American politics. Is George Romney the best apparent swinger we can produce to carry on the new tradition? Holy moderation, Batman! A brown bear in February has a better idea of where the action is than George Romney does. That Michigan's mellifluous mugwump should be accepted as the current big sound of American politics bodes ill for surfboards, Hugh Hefner and Hondas. Should he be elected our current frenetic imbecility shall surely give way to a stupid torpor and the closest thing to the frug that you'll be able to find will be the twitch in President George's brow as he ponders whether to bomb Hanoi, which the populus shall encourage from the recesses of their slumber chairs with languid sighs of "Yeah, George, One more once!"




Besides, Romney doesn't drink. And any man who doesn't drink and still can't talk straight isn't to be trusted. That's not just my opinion. I am bolstered by the editorial page of the Washington Evening Star, which usually treats GOP presidential candidates with the reverence that Jack Valenti accords Mr. Johnson. The Star said recently of Romney:

"As Goldwater thoughtfully noted, the Michigan governor has never taken

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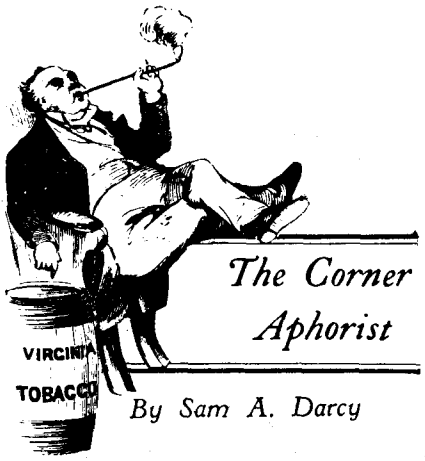


# The Corner Aphorist

By Sam A. Darcy

Sign in a Delaware supermarket:
LOOSE TOMATOES ARE CHEAP

Hurrah! The supermarket has now reached the cultural level of the old village general store. It engages in social criticism.

* * * * * *

►In ancient Athens men debated issues in public forums and market places where goods were sold. In our time TV and radio airwaves should serve this function and, indeed, much goods are sold there. But only some views, of approved people, in limited numbers, are allowed. Instead we get a plethora of soap operas. It would serve our country well if we had fewer soap operas and more soap boxes.

* * * * * * * * * * * *

►"VIETNAM PROTESTER IS JAILED FOR PROFANITY

"Chico, Calif. (UPI) College teacher Edmund di Tullio has been sentenced to five days in jail and fined $200 for using profanity in a speech denouncing U. S. policy in Vietnam.

"Di Tullio, 41, a history professor at Chico State College and a former marine, was arrested two days after his Oct. 23 speech on a complaint by an Oroville, Calif., housewife."

The news report didn't say that the Oroville lady and the court were outraged by our down-payment of 50,000 American boys dead and maimed in this escalating war--only by a college professor, a former marine, saying "damn" or some such naughty word at the foreign policy that produced this continuing disaster. He must go to the bastille for such an horrendous crime. Is it possible we are all living in a crazy house and don't know it?

* * * * * * * * * * * *

►Cousin Barnegat, pencil in hand, puzzled look on face, asked us to solve this problem in arithmetic:

Two years ago it was reported that the Vietcong had 35,000 men in South Vietnam. This has since been augmented by some 47,000 men infiltrated from North Vietnam, making a total of 82,000. Our intelligence arm reports the V. C. in those two years suffered about 113,000 casualties and 75,000 desertions. And now they have 265,000 men left!

It must be that new math. I knew no good would come of it when my nephew first came in to ask for help in his homework.

* * * * * * * * * * * *

►The electorate cast a big anti-Johnson vote. They didn't like the Vietnam war. They voted Republican. It was the only way they knew to vote against Johnson. What other choice was there? LBJ has apparently decided that the vote means he must cut welfare programs. Astonishing? No! This

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kind of logic has a famous precedent. Maybe you've heard it:

A professor, holding a frog in one hand, commanded it to jump. It leaped into his other hand. Next he removed the frog's legs. This time when he shouted, "Jump!" the frog didn't move. "And so," he concluded, "you will note that when you remove the legs of a frog, he grows quite deaf."

# The Choco Project

By A.H. S. Candlin

(A massive project to construct a new passage between the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans is underway in Colombia. The project was thought up by members of the Hudson Institute, a research center in New York state. Regular Idler contributor A. H. S. Candlin is currently attached to the institute and he sends us this report on the exciting new plan)

A remarkable and historic enterprise, which undoubtedly will rank as one of the major achievements of the 20th Century, has commenced in the Choco Province of Colombia. The government of Colombia has announced its intention to dam up the Atrato and San Juan Rivers in the northwest portion of the country and to build a system of canals and lakes that will create a new interoceanic passage across the American continent.

The development of the waterway system, which will be several hundred miles long, has been proclaimed as a national goal by Colombia's president. The Choco Project owes its conception principally to staff members of the Hudson Institute, headed by Robert Panero, and to a group of consultants including Marcello de Leva. They believe they have a plan that is rational, coherent and essentially simple.

Their feasibility studies indicate that the project would have these advantages:

--"The flooding of the inland area of Choco, mostly covered by marshland, would give access to the sea and to world commerce a large (potentially rich) interior zone of Colombia.

--"It provides an inter-oceanic route that would undoubtedly be used by shipping serving the west coast of South America and possibly Australia.

--"It offers to the United States and to the world an alternative route to the Panama Canal in the case of severe blockage of that sea waterway.

--"A large part of Colombia with indications of rich mineral resources, timber stands, and agricultural possibilities becomes open to development.

--"The creation of an artificial lake some hundred feet above sea level in an area of extremely high rainfall makes available a large block of power of the order of one to one-and-a-half million horsepower at a reasonable cost."

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The originators of the plan have produced a proposal that will transform the map of South America. It will not only alter Colombia but undoubtedly provide a pattern and inspiration for large scale projects in other areas.

The region of Choco, a largely uninhabited rain forest on the Pacific coastal plain west of the Andes, extends from the Atlantic at Uraha to the estuary of the San Juan River on the Pacific coast just north of Bonaventura. The inclination of the province is approximately along a north-south line between the Serrania del Daudo on the west and the Cordillera Occidental of the Andes on its eastern limits. This is a comparatively flat and low-lying region that has a rainfall ranging from 250 to 390 inches annually, an unusually heavy precipitation. Most of the region is presently unaccessable. The projected canals, dams and resulting lake system would change all that.

The project can be broken down into three main areas:

The Southern Project Area: This would involve the Malaguita dike and power plant. The dike would be about 1400 yards long and would create a 75-mile long body of water to be called San Juan Lake. 400,000 KW of power would be supplied by the power plant. There would also be a navigational canal and twin locks for 20,000 ton freighters. The canal would be about 4.5 miles long.

The Central Project Area: This would include three navigational subprojects with a combined length of 35 miles.

The North Project Area: This would consist of the Domingodo-Cuchillo dike and power plant. The length of the dike would be 21 miles and 1.4 million KW of power would result from the plant. In addition there would be a 35 mile long canal with another set of twin locks for 20,000 ton freighters. Atrato Lake, 125 miles long, would be created by the construction here.

The project, still in its earliest stages, has generated much enthusiasm because of the important and significant results foreseen. Two inland advanced industrial cities--Medellin and Manizales--will be only two hours away from the interoceanic passage, thus offering great export possibilities. It is also expected that there will be considerable lake shore development and settlement within easy reach of the Pacific coast.

Stimulus will be provided to the extraction of important commercial minerals such as copper ores, lead, zinc, gold, platinum and bauxite. Hitherto development has lagged because of lack of communication, power, skilled population etc., all of which should become available with the new project. In addition, there is the possibility of petroleum exploration development. Growth in timbering, industrialized fishing and tourist trade are also expected.

A number of alterntatives have been worked out for the expense and timetable of the project, but one estimate is that the total cost of a power project producing about 3.3 million KW, combined with the interoceanic passage would be $743 million.

The important thing at present is that the Colombia government has set its seal on the initiation of the project by stating that it will begin the southern part forthwith. In all probability some financing will come from

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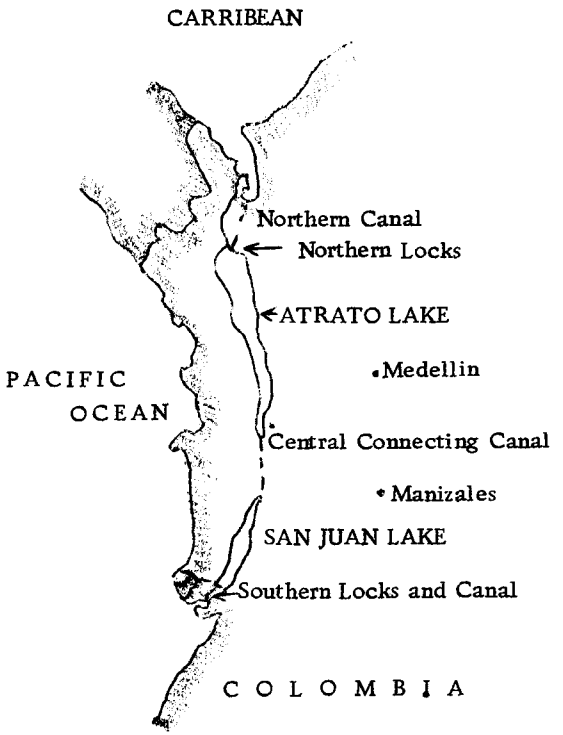


T H E C H O C O P R O J E C T

from the World Bank or the U. S. , but as yet the financial structure behind the effort has not been clearly defined. The rate of progress is difficult to forecast and chiefly depends upon the rate of investment, the availability of technical and manpower resources and on a number of other present intangibles, but an informed guess might place the completion of the project about fifteen years in the future.

The experience gained during the course of the project by engineers and construction personnel will constitute a resource of incalcuable value in the future economic development of a continent where virtually untapped natural treasures await in large quantities. The initiation of the Choco Project is not only a proud occasion in the history of Colombia, but is an event presaging great benefit to all of South America, where many dramatic programs of a similar nature are also possible.

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GOP CONT'D.....

clear public stands on many of the national issues. When pinned down by questioners on such topics as the Vietnam war, Romney's off-the-cuff answers have been masterpieces of obfuscation, raising serious doubts about the clarity of his thinking....

"Being a Super Eagle Scout is simply not enough."

Of course, Romney's not the only alternative. There's also Charles Percy. Percy capped his business career by becoming president of Bell & Howell at the age of 29. His subsequent political career is running only slightly behind that pace, since he is being suggested as a presidential candidate after having having won exactly one election and without having voted on a single issue. He is a moderate Republican, which in Percy's case means you support Goldwater in '64 but deny him in '66 and that you back open housing but live in a neighborhood restricted to gentile whites.

Percy is young, handsome, personable and people call him Chuck. He appears to be reasonably intelligent and reasonably honest. He has never been known to speak harshly of progress, faith in the future, or the constructive relationship between business and government. From this point on the matter becomes more hazy and it looks like we have another nicely designed, moisture-proof GOP package with no indication of what the contents are.

Then there is Milhous, the red-baiter turned wing-waiter, who is, in his method of operation, a sort of urbanized Lyndon Johnson. His cleverness is more furtive, his deceits are carried out with less full-throated braggadocio, but still the men are remarkably similar. They thrive on cunning, live in an ideological vacumn, can outdoubletalk a rewinding tape recorder and have never been known to let facts get in the way of any public statement.

Nixon's particular skill is best manifested in his ability to toss a single idea in reciprocal directions at the same time. No one is more adept at attacking critics of the Vietnam war while attacking the President's conduct of that war; defending academic freedom and criticizing those who exercise it; and leaving a trail of pro-civil rights statements behind him as he trundles on down to the southern segregationists' lair.

The possibility of Nixon winning the 1968 nomination is a frightening one. Not only because the people will once again have to exert themselves to get rid of that persistent little man, but because--in order to do so--they shall have to stick with an incumbent whose personal traits are just as unsatisfying. A Johnson-Nixon contest would be democracy's Dien Bien Phu and we should expect the locusts within six months.

Finally, we must consider Ronald Reagan. Now I, unlike many of my liberal friends, see nothing wrong with Reagan being governor of California.

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Reagan is a fitting reward for that Pacific parody of America.

The problem is how to keep him within the state's boundaries. The madness that infects California may be contagious. We may all be ready for a dream trip in politics; we may subconsciously require a president who will let us wallow contentedly in the slime of our basest cliches, who will succor our primitive hates and fears, who will foster a fundamentalist democracy in which the world is saved by faith alone. Prepare thyself! The day of dogmatic idiocy may be close at hand.

Take your choice. Romney, Reagan, Dick or Chuck. These are the men who will be repeatedly presented to us in the coming months as the logical contenders for the GOP presidential nomination. We shall be expected to compare them somberly and studiously as though we were observing matter of substance. The press and the press agents will admonish us to look at 'em go, and we will stare humbly.

I have, however, one dream of hope.

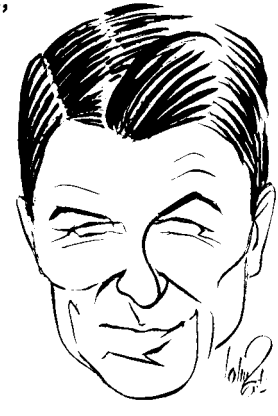
In this dream a little boy with Beatle haircut, prefaded jeans and scruffy sneakers peeks in amongst the adult huddle and inquires:

"Whatcha lookin at, man?"

And we reply, "The Republican candidates, my son."

And he looks again and says, "But I don't see nuttin'."

And we look again and see what he sees and feel just a little ashamed. (s. s.)



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# *The McDowell Papers*

*By Charles McDowell, Jr.*

There is at hand a wintry bulletin from the Emergency Warning Branch of the Weather Bureau of the Environmental Science Services Administration of the Department of Commerce.

Any communication with such a pedigree would be impressive. This one was particularly so because it began speaking breathlessly, right at the top , about the "savagery of the season. "

As I read on, I braced myself for one of those unnerving warnings that there was a ten per cent chance that we all would be buried by a hurricane of sleet within the next 48 hours. (Does one put on the snow tires when the probability is only ten per cent or fight off panic and wait until the probability reaches, say ., 30 per cent?)

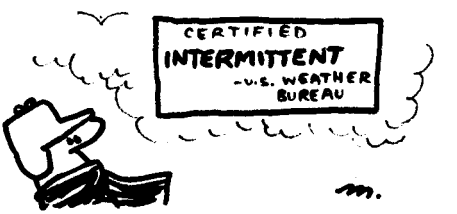
It is a relief to report that the bulletin turned out to be only an explanation of some of the terms the Weather Bureau will be using in its forecasts during this winter season.

The bulletin says the terms are being explained anew "with the intent of refreshing the public mind on the meaning of warnings and establishing a forecaster-to-people rapport essential for quick comprehension of winter weather situations. "

So let us briefly put aside politics and war--and also any quibbling about the curious phrase, "forecaster-to-people rapport" -- and let us refresh ourselves on the terms explained in the bulletin.

When the Weather Bureau forecasts snow, it says, it means that snow will fall steadily for several hours. However, there is this to remember: "Qualifying words such as occasional or intermittent obviously indicate breaks in the snowfall. "

Would you have thought of that? Well, think about it. If it is clear to everyone, let us get on with the further establishment of a forecaster-to-people rapport.




Consider, for example, the phenomenon of "blowing and drifting snow. " The bulletin says, "These usually occur together and result from strong winds and falling snow or loose snow on the ground. "

When you have got that straight, you are ready for the Weather Bureau's elaboration of the explanation: "Blowing snow is defined as snow lifted from the surface by the wind... Drifting snow indicates that strong winds will blow falling or loose snow into significant drifts. "

Now you are ready for a blizzard, and this seems to be the vital part of

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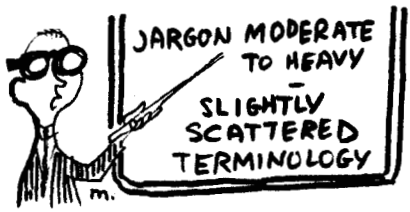


what the bulletin wants you to understand about a blizzard: "It is characterized by low temperatures, strong winds and heavy snow."

Please feel free to clip that concise line out of The Idler and paste it in your hat.

The bulletin makes some comparatively sophisticated distinctions between "blizzard warnings" and "severe blizzard warnings," and among "ice storms," "freezing rain" and "freezing drizzle." This is very advanced stuff but the point is that freezing rain and freezing drizzle will form ice coatings that can cause "damage to trees, wires and other vulnerable exposed objects."

Vulnerable exposed objects might include, I would guess, people who had not achieved a satisfactory forecaster-to-people rapport or simply did not have sense enough to come in out of the freezing rain.

In any event, the Weather Bureau offers a basic guiding principle to keep in mind about freezing rain and freezing drizzle: "Damage will be greater if the freezing rain or drizzle is accompanied by high winds."

Everyone may not want to turn his hatband into a regular anthology of the Weather Bureau's aphorisms, but I am pasting that one in, too.

(Copyright, Newsday, 1966)

## HUGH HAYNIE ...

"Some Jackasses in the Party Have Kicked Up, but the Situation is Well in Hand!"

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# Two Songs for the War

By Frank Turaj

(Editor's Note: No group in American life has been more derelict in its responsibility to enhance our commitment in Vietnam than the song writers. Frank Turaj helps to correct this deplorable situation with two songs for a modern war. The tunes are familiar.)

## OVER THERE: 1967

Over there! Over there!
Send the word, send the word
To beware.
For the hawks are drumming,
The bombs are coming,
The rockets humming
In the air.

Say a prayer! Say a prayer!
For the homeless millions over there.
For the napalm's flying,
The leaves are dying,
The children crying,
Everywhere.

Don't despair! Don't despair!
If this war is useless,
We don't care.
Because we have our pride, yes.
We'll save our face, yes.
And we won't come back
Till there's no one over there.

(Editor's note: Tradition has it that this song was composed and first sung by one Pvt. J. Pool, a fighter in the ranks, at the battle of Mendel River.)

## THE PRIVATE POOL MARCH

My life has known its glory
From the coming of the Reds.
They are infiltrating governments
And putting bugs in beds.

They are curdling milk
And ruining cakes
And executing spies
And telling all manner of lies.

Glory, Glory!
Let's blame it all on Reds:
Hunger, pestilence, injustice,
Anguish, fear and dread.

Damn the non-Caucasian world!
The white man's banner stands unfurled.
Our truth is marching on!

## BACK PAGE

The drawing on the back page was done by Paul Kennedy, of New York City.

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